

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A heat transfer material comprising:
a base layer;
a release layer overlaying the base layer, which release layer comprises a particulate material; and
an image-receptive transfer film overlaying the release layer;
wherein the release layer and the image-receptive transfer film are adapted to provide cold release properties.
2. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the base layer is selected from the group consisting of films and cellulosic nonwoven webs.
3. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the base layer includes a latex-impregnated cellulosic nonwoven web.
4. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the release layer further comprises a polymer having essentially no tack at transfer temperatures of about 177 degrees Celsius.
5. The heat transfer material of claim 4, further wherein the polymer is selected from the group consisting of acrylic polymers and poly(vinyl acetate).
6. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the release layer further comprises a crosslinked polymer.
7. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the release layer further comprises an effective amount of a release-enhancing additive.
8. The heat transfer material of claim 7, further wherein the release-enhancing additive is selected from the group consisting of a divalent metal ion

salt of a fatty acid, a polyethylene glycol, a polysiloxane surfactant, and mixtures thereof.

9. The heat transfer material of claim 7, further wherein the release-enhancing additive is selected from the group consisting of calcium stearate, a polyethylene glycol having a molecular weight of from about 2,000 to about 100,000, a siloxane-polyether surfactant, and mixtures thereof.

10. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the image-receptive transfer film comprises a film-forming binder.

11. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the image-receptive transfer film comprises a powdered thermoplastic polymer and a film-forming binder.

12. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the particulate material is non-meltable.

13. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the release layer further comprises from about 2 to about 50 percent by weight particulate material.

14. The heat transfer material of claim 1, further wherein the particulate material is selected from the group consisting of cellulose particles, silica particles, clay particles, and mixtures thereof.

15. The heat transfer material of claim 1, wherein the image-receptive transfer film comprises a meltable layer.

16. The heat transfer material of claim 1, wherein the image-receptive transfer film comprises an ink-compatible layer.

17. The heat transfer material of claim 16, wherein the ink-compatible layer comprises a film-forming binder and a powdered thermoplastic polymer.

18. A cold-peel heat transfer material comprising:

a cellulosic nonwoven web; and

a release layer overlaying the cellulosic nonwoven web, which release layer comprises from about 10% to about 50% of a first polymer having essentially no tack at transfer temperatures of about 177 degrees Celsius and from about 2% to about 50% kaolin clay particles; and

an image-receptive transfer film overlaying the release layer, the image-receptive transfer film comprising a meltable second polymer;

wherein the release layer and the image-receptive transfer film are adapted to provide cold release properties.

19. A method of applying an image to a substrate, the method comprising the steps of:

a) applying an image to a heat transfer material, the heat transfer material comprising:

a base layer;

a release layer overlaying the base layer, which release layer comprises a particulate material; and

an image-receptive transfer film overlaying the release layer;

wherein the release layer and the image-receptive transfer film are adapted to provide the heat transfer material with cold release properties;

wherein the image is applied to the image-receptive transfer film;

b) positioning the heat transfer material adjacent a substrate with the image facing the substrate;

c) transferring the image and the image-receptive transfer film to the substrate.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the particulate material is non-meltable.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the release layer further comprises from about 2 to about 50 percent by weight particulate material.

22. The method of claim 19, wherein the particulate material is selected from the group consisting of cellulose particles, silica particles, clay particles, and mixtures thereof.